

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
ACADEMIC SENATE

Minutes of the
ACADEMIC SENATE
Thursday, March 12, 1992
UU 220, 3:00-5:00pm

THIS SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE WAS CALLED TO PROVIDE ALL SENATORS A FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INPUT TO THE PROGRAM REVIEW TASK FORCE REGARDING THE "ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT" DOCUMENT

Preparatory: The meeting was called to order at 3:12pm.

- I. Minutes:
- II. Communication(s) and Announcement(s):
- III. Reports:
- IV. Consent Agenda:
- V. Business Items:
- VI. Discussion:

"Academic Program Review and Improvement" Document: J Weatherby gave a review of the committee's approach to preparing a review document. In view of the diversity of programs at Cal Poly, the committee attempted to design a document that provided "a level playing field" that gives everyone a fair chance to honestly present the qualities of their program(s). In order to do this, one has to provide enough questions. No one is going to answer all the questions asked by the document. The committee did not want to duplicate a five-year review instrument nor did it want to have 50 different evaluation documents submitted. P Murphy: This appears to be something like a scientific experiment, and the most important part of the experiment is the design. The design period should take the longest. The review committee was given an unreasonably short time line to do the most important part of any program review (the design). It takes a lot of thoughtful deliberation to determine what makes a meaningful program review. This should not be just a data-gathering exercise. This is NOT an emergency situation.

Weatherby: In fairness, this is the third generation of committees formed to look at program review. Andrews: It was never expected that this type of program review would be completed in one year. Wilson: It seems there's a dire need to have some type of program review in place for this year. There will be budget cuts this year and there's no faculty input to the administration on these cuts. Also, in reading through the document I don't find how we measure certain things: What is the student involvement level? What is the value added to graduates? How is program quality measured? This document is just a laundry list. Weatherby: We need a laundry list because Cal Poly is both polytechnic and comprehensive. Each department can take from this list what is applicable to their department.

Amspacher: I thought we had decided we needed two documents. One for budgeting and one for program review? Is this document to be used for both funding and quality measurements? Andrews: For our purposes, we are talking about program quality. But, inevitably, this will be used by administration for funding decisions. We do have the Budget Committee developing a short list of program information that will be used immediately for budget purposes.

Vilkitis: I'd like to thank the committee for all its work and its tolerance toward the Academic

Senate for rehashing certain things over and over. We need to determine what direction we want to move in. There are three issues that need clarity: (1) Do we want an academic program review? (2) Do we want the Academic Senate to participate in the process of budget allocations? and (3) Do we want to use the academic program review in the budgetary process? These really are three different directions we need to decide on. J Murphy: This committee has put tremendous effort in drafting this document. I feel we need to allow them to produce the criteria they feel is fitting. We need a program review process and it can't be a hurry-up process. At some future time, we can determine whether the proposed process is doing what we want it to do. Keesey: If the Senate wants to have a voice in program review, this document won't do it. It will only produce information for administration. Weatherby: A review committee will receive the information and make recommendations to the Senate.

Pedersen: Rankings and evaluative assignments are appropriate when budget decisions need to be made. But when one is looking at program review--the strengths and weaknesses of a program--the focus must be 'review.' The committee felt strongly that any ranking element would make the document a budgetary instrument. Mori: There must be some way to measure if a program is meeting the "goals." The present document does not provide this. Grinnell: The thing we should be looking at is the value we add to students. How things are tailored to do this. This document never mentions what we're trying to do for the students. I don't see how we can separate program quality from the goals. We need a way to tie these to each other. Is a program doing a good job of giving students the information they need? Weatherby: Those are interesting questions. Your comment about goals is a relevant question. The goals in Part One are taken directly out of Title 5 which is the reason for the existence of the university. We are charged with two missions: First of all, Cal Poly is to perform the functions of one of the state universities of California and, in addition, it may also do these other things. So we can have an excellent program, but if it doesn't meet the goals of the university, it may have to go in a time of budgetary crisis. That may be the test. Second, accreditation is very important. It's stated in here to be the first test of a program. The document also calls for an outside evaluation if a program is not accredited. The third question the document asks is 'how do you evaluate your program?' The issue regarding students, I agree, is implied but not stated as a goal.

Howard: This process allows each department to take stock of itself and how it wants to project itself to an accrediting body. The information already assembled could be put in program-budgeting terms for the evaluation committee. Bailey: I agree, I think we absolutely have to have a program review. The Curriculum Committee has been operating in a vacuum for the past four years because we need the information called for in this document. We have attempted to set up criteria for curriculum review but it has been a slow and evolving process. I would like to see some of these pieces (of program review) feeding into curriculum development. We need something that will determine if a program is standing still. One thing we have noticed in the curriculum process is that outside review does not tell us how we are to evolve. Weatherby: I think it is fair to say that criteria can be developed that would compare the English Department at Cal Poly with the English Department at Northridge, Pomona, Long Beach, etc. based on things like the size of classes, amount of resources, publications, etc. From this, suggestions can be made as to how a program can be improved. Sater: I think program review is an opportunity for a school to look at what they're doing, to clean up their act a bit and to look around outside. I don't think we should just compare between CSU's. You can look at the best there is and see if it can/can't happen here, instead of just looking from department to department to measure how one is doing.

Pedersen: The document will need to go through a trial period before we can eliminate what is not significant. DeMers: We have so much diversity within the university, and I would rather see an inclusive document than a restrictive one. However, the problem I see with any document and the criteria that are set is if a department doesn't pull its weaknesses out (by reporting), how will the evaluation committee do so? Andre: What is the relationship between the evaluation committee and the Budget Committee. Will they work in tandem? Will the information be provided to the Budget Committee? Will they use it in their determination? Andrews: The information will be available to them, but it will not guide their review.

Devore: I think this is a good document. I think the process is a good one. Over the years that I have been here, my observation is that there is a hesitation to scrutinize ourselves--to engage in self-examination. Wilson: I think it's time to move ahead. I don't think we have a choice, but it

should be clear that this won't be used for a year or two to evaluate programs. P Murphy: Program review and budget review are intertwined very closely. Since we are going to a dollar budget, each department will have to scrutinize itself very closely because choices we never had to make we have to make now. Through this type of Darwinian method, we are going to make decisions about what is important to us. Howard: What we have suggested as a process will at least allow the possibility of survival. Each department can document why it's here, why it's valuable. The previous process (last spring) did not allow this. P Murphy: As a member of that previous committee, that allegation is totally false. Amspacher: If we are going to "evaluate," we need standards and a determination of what weights will be put on those standards. I don't see why we can't develop the criteria first instead of gathering all the data and then letting the criteria develop itself later. J Murphy: A program needs to be evaluated from time-to-time to see if it's doing what it's supposed to be doing. For this reason it shouldn't be used to make budget decisions. Maybe there is a better way to do review, but the only way to find it is to get started.

Bertozzi: We've been discussing the various criteria on this list. A number of people have commented that we shouldn't be comparing programs until all the programs have been evaluated. What does the Senate do if budget decisions need to be made before all programs have been reviewed? Andrews: This is the role of the Budget Committee. Bertozzi: Is the Budget Committee a short-term approach and program evaluation a long-term approach? How do these feed into each other? The Budget Committee will have to evaluate a program's quality. Brumley: Speaking as a member of the Budget Committee, some measure of quality must be tied to the decisions made. Yoshimura: In defining the term "quality," everybody comes up with a different list of criteria and different points to support their statement of program quality. In drafting this document, we were depending on the program self-evaluation to state what bits of information support the statement of a program's "quality."

Mori: We need some assurance that there will be a fair comparison of programs. We need some uniform questions that will provide comparable information. Is the program meeting the criteria? There needs to be a clear set of evaluating criteria. Wilson: Is weighing quality possible? Is there a way to evaluate all programs within one year with a shorter set of criteria to complete? Vilkitis: I think this document is a good starting point. We can pick 'indicator' criteria from what's here, then do an in-depth analysis after that.

A show of hands was requested to see if the "body was willing to move on with this document knowing that someplace along the line people will be using it (a program review) for budgetary purposes." The majority of senators present agreed with this position.

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.

Recorded by:
Margaret Camuso
Academic Senate Office

Approved by:
Craig Russell, Secretary
Academic Senate

Date:

Date: